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President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 31 (*continued*)

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/54/484)

Draft resolution (A/54/L.38)

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report of 21 October 1999 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This, and the report on the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace in Africa, demonstrate the importance of cooperation between the two organizations in seeking a definitive solution to the problems of Africa.

The Secretary-General has indicated that cooperation with the OAU has increased, both quantitatively and qualitatively. His report reveals the high level of cooperation that has been achieved between the secretariats and various agencies in the field of peace and security, economic and social matters and other areas. In this respect, we feel it to be indispensable to maintain the kind of close, high-level contacts that were achieved at the OAU summits in Algeria in July and in New York in September this year.

This would not seem to be the appropriate moment to refer to the various conflicts plaguing Africa, but we can make certain reflections on what the United Nations might do to contribute to a solution to these. In this regard, I would mention the debate that took place on 29 September in the Security Council on the situation in Africa, which was attended by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Secretary-General of the OAU, Mr. Salim Salim, and the Permanent Representative of Algeria, who spoke on behalf of the Chairman of that organization.

One of the main conclusions reached was on the need to expand cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in Africa. In our opinion, this cooperation should have a comprehensive focus, taking the following elements into account.

First, the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace falls without exception to the Security Council. Secondly, in order to obtain its objectives, the Council needs close cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in Africa, particularly with respect to prevention and early warning. Thirdly, in order to achieve durable peace in Africa, the minimum conditions for development must be established so as to eliminate the causes of conflict and to alleviate their humanitarian consequences. Here, the various United Nations agencies

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and the Bretton Woods institutions must join forces in support of the efforts of the African countries themselves. The Algiers Declaration, adopted at the OAU summit, bears witness to this need. Fourthly, reconciliation within societies that have suffered conflict must be pursued emphatically and with a sense of realism.

Although some conflicts in Africa have not yet been settled, we have noted a positive trend developing throughout the year. Complex issues, such as those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, have yielded to negotiation thanks to the imaginative input of regional leaders and organizations. The United Nations must support these initiatives in order to maintain and consolidate the peace achieved at such expense. In this regard, we feel that cooperation among the organizations of the region is indispensable.

We wish to reaffirm Argentina's commitment to Africa. From the outset, we have participated in and promoted the process of decolonization. Today, we support the rule of law and the opening of the region's economies. We have increased our trade and technological exchanges and strengthened our political and cultural relations.

At the multilateral level, Argentina, along with African countries, has promoted the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Atlantic. Similarly, the fifth ministerial meeting of the members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, held in Buenos Aires in October last year, was attended by representatives of 21 African and three Latin American countries. Argentina is currently coordinating the zone's Permanent Committee and has proposed to the member States a series of initiatives to deepen cooperation.

In conclusion, I wish to stress the role played by the African countries themselves within the OAU and subregional organizations in the search for solutions to their problems. This trend, which has been growing throughout the year, requires all the support of the international community.

Mr. Bouah-Kamon (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): In the Algiers Declaration, adopted in July 1999 at the end of their summit, the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) reaffirmed their responsibility for ensuring peace and stability on the African continent and for establishing institutions to promote balanced and fair economic and social development for all countries. In order to attain these objectives, they stressed the need to strengthen the Organization of African Unity.

Two months later, at Sirte in Libya, the fourth extraordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of the OAU considered the ways and means of strengthening the organization with a view to rendering it more effective and adaptable to social, political and economic changes and to making it the preferred instrument for collective action for Africa and for cooperation with the rest of the world.

The ideal framework for this cooperation with the rest of the world is clearly the United Nations, the fulcrum for the international community's initiatives for Africa. My delegation attaches great importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, which is governed by the agreement of 15 November 1965 that was updated on 9 October 1990, given the decisive role played by the world Organization in the maintenance of peace and the promotion of development in Africa.

This cooperation between the two organizations affects many fields of United Nations activity and, in growing, must seek to promote partnership while avoiding competition and duplication of effort and to increase exchanges of information and studies while strengthening the institutional capacities and the expertise of the African organization in many sectors. The strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU must follow three broad directions.

First, the participation of the OAU in United Nations activities and initiatives on Africa must increase. The United Nations Special Initiative for Africa, conceived as an instrument for implementing the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, was designed without the contribution of OAU experts. While it is true that the Special Initiative is a framework for coordination of United Nations activity to promote African development, joint action with the OAU could consolidate the success of its implementation. My delegation encourages the cooperation of all institutions entrusted with the implementation of the Initiative and welcomes the fact that the OAU and the African Development Bank have been invited attend, as observers, the work of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa.

In order to achieve their objectives, the programmes concerning the promotion and the protection of human

rights, democratization in Africa and good governance and the actions taken within the framework of preventive diplomacy should involve OAU mechanisms and institutions. The initiatives taken by the various United Nations programmes, funds and agencies to involve the OAU further in their activities concerning Africa are praiseworthy, particularly the coordination of activities between the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the OAU concerning the question of good governance in Africa and the preparation of the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

As regards conflict prevention, the contribution of the OAU to the study of the causes of conflicts in Africa could enrich consideration and bring innovative ideas drawn from its long experience in the field. Its participation in the debate and close collaboration between the two secretariats in conflict prevention and settlement must be pursued and intensified.

The Economic Commission for Africa has collaborated with the OAU in identifying common African positions in the preparation of major United Nations conferences of the 1990s. In the follow-up to these conferences, it would be desirable to initiate regional meetings and studies, in collaboration with the OAU, on the impact of these conferences on Africa's development, on the progress achieved and on new measures to be taken to accelerate the attainment of objectives.

Secondly, to increase United Nations support for the activities and the initiatives of the OAU, the heads of State and Government of the OAU decided at Algiers to proclaim the year 2000 the year of peace in Africa. This political will will become a concrete reality only if the efforts of African Governments go hand in hand with those of the international community not only to restore peace in zones of conflict, but also to prevent and to halt the outbreak of new conflicts in sensitive zones. To that end, the United Nations must strengthen its support for the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa and help it to progressively develop its potential for conflict prevention and settlement. The international community must support African efforts by providing the material means and the logistics necessary for peacekeeping operations.

Africa is declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone through the Treaty of Pelindaba. The United Nations must contribute to the training of African experts in the field of the protection of the continent from nuclear weapons and wastes, and in demining.

The Abuja Treaty established the African Economic Community, aiming at the progressive establishment of African economic integration. The United Nations and its organs, such as the Economic and Social Council, the specialized agencies and programmes, must not lose this perspective when they develop projects for Africa. The regional or subregional approach must be taken into account to promote the continent's economic integration. For example, the World Bank should finance transnational road infrastructures and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) should propose regional projects in view of this integration so desired by African countries. We congratulate the ECA for the project on promoting economic integration through the creation of an African economic community and for the draft protocols to give effect to the Abuja Treaty.

Africa faces a stark shortage of resources. The United Nations, an organization represented worldwide, could make its structures available to the OAU, with a view to facilitating the mobilization of resources towards Africa, supporting the campaign for the cancellation of the African debt and advocating the increase of resources, of official development assistance and of the prices of export products.

The United Nations should listen more to Africa and acknowledge the needs expressed by the continent. The recent opening of a United Nations office at the OAU will facilitate communication between the two organizations and will strengthen their cooperation.

Thirdly, regarding the promotion of joint initiatives of the United Nations and the OAU, my delegation is happy to note that such initiatives are increasing between the two secretariats.

At the time of the Rwandan crisis, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU appointed a joint representative in the Great Lakes region. It is a good initiative which deserves encouragement, after all the aspects of such a mission have been seriously examined.

Ministerial conferences have been organized on the refugees and displaced persons in Africa with the cooperation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, on good governance with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme and on human rights with the support of the

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It is appropriate to welcome the cooperation for electoral assistance in Africa, which permitted honest, transparent and democratic elections to take place in recent years. The two secretariats have increased consultations and exchanges of information with a view to strengthening their common capacities to prevent and settle conflicts in Africa and should work jointly toward that end. This close cooperation must be pursued in order to allow the two organizations to achieve their common objectives, those of maintaining peace and of promoting economic and social development for the peoples of Africa.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing the issues of conflict prevention and economic development, cannot be overstated. Japan therefore supports the enhanced mutual cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

The OAU has been engaged in admirable activities in order to advance the cause of peace and prosperity in Africa. Its efforts were instrumental in facilitating various peace agreements in the conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The OAU's leadership in mobilizing international political, financial and material support for the Economic Community of West African States initiative in Liberia is highly commendable. So are its patient efforts to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Moreover, the OAU's comprehensive framework of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa is an important piece of work for peace on the continent.

But the OAU's activities need much support from African countries and their partners in the developed world. Such cooperation, particularly between the United Nations and the OAU, is essential, for example, in order to ensure that the OAU Mechanism functions effectively.

Japan, for its part, has been extending financial support to the OAU Peace Fund, which finances the OAU's activities to implement the comprehensive framework. Over the past five years, Japan's contributions to the Fund have amounted to $1,450,000. These contributions have been utilized for various conflict prevention and democratization activities, including the establishment of an early-warning system in the OAU, the Comoros peace talks, the Burundi peace process and the presidential election in Nigeria. Recently, Japan assisted the OAU Liaison Office and Neutral Facilitator during the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to continue to provide financial support for the activities of the OAU.

As we all know, it is essential to prevent the recurrence of conflicts in order to ensure the development of many countries in Africa, where peace is often fragile and poverty hampers efforts for post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation. In this context, we fully support the view expressed by Mr. Salim Salim, Secretary-General of the OAU, at the Security Council in September this year with regard to the need for timely action by the international community, particularly the United Nations and the Security Council, to support the promotion of peace by the OAU.

It goes without saying that what we need most for conflict resolution and conflict prevention in Africa is increased international attention. That is essential in order to raise the level of international cooperation, not only with the OAU but also with the countries concerned for their activities at all stages of conflict resolution and conflict prevention, as well as post-conflict reconstruction.

We therefore welcome this opportunity for the Members of the United Nations to discuss cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. It is a strong hope of the Japanese Government that this discussion will help enhance the level of international attention to the issue of conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Tekaya (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): While associating itself with the statement made yesterday by the Algerian delegation on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) under this agenda item, the Tunisian delegation would like to raise a few issues in connection with this item.

My delegation would first like to reiterate the particular interest of my country, Tunisia, in cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. We would like to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his continuous efforts to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. We would also like to express our deep gratitude for the report he presented to the General Assembly on this item.

The Tunisian delegation is pleased to note the interest of the United Nations system in Africa. The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa reflects this interest. In the report the Secretary-General recommends a series of important activities in favour of peace, stability and development in Africa. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU covers a number of areas, such as peace and security and economic and social development. Achievements recorded thus far and listed in the Secretary-General's report are encouraging and deserve to be followed up.

From its inception the OAU has embodied the aspirations of the African peoples and countries for the unity of the continent. It has played a decisive part in affirming the political identity of the continent and in promoting rapprochement, solidarity and cooperation among its States. It has thus become the preferred framework for all African collective action and for the continent's relationships with the rest of the world.

The OAU has also articulated the will of the African States to tackle jointly the many political, economic and social challenges which confront them. However, the solutions to many of these challenges depend on the commitment and support of the international community as a whole. Therefore, we are gratified to note the priority attached by United Nations organs to the development of Africa. Several economic and social programmes and initiatives have been launched over the years by the United Nations system in favour of Africa, and we appeal for their harmonization.

My delegation welcomes the regular consultations being held among officials of these two organizations in the priority fields of cooperation and coordination. These consultations enhance the links of cooperation between the two organizations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of peace and security in recent years has shown remarkable progress, making possible close coordination of efforts to manage and resolve certain conflicts in Africa peacefully. We appeal to the United Nations and its Member States to continue to increase their support for the OAU in order to strengthen the institutional and operational capacities of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa. Since its creation only a few years ago, the Mechanism has produced positive results despite its limited means. It is an invaluable tool for the continent and deserves to be strengthened.

In this context, we would like to reaffirm that Africa's will to shoulder its responsibilities should not relieve the United Nations of its own obligations for maintaining peace and international security deriving from its Charter.

The OAU and its member States have made continuous efforts to promote cooperation and economic integration with a view to implementing the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The continuous support of the United Nations and the specialized agencies for these efforts will accelerate the establishment of the African Economic Community.

As the twenty-first century dawns, the African countries appeal for an international partnership that is mutually beneficial, based on interdependence, solidarity and cooperation in order to derive the benefit of the potential of globalization and in order to meet its challenges. We hope that all the friends of Africa will hearken to this appeal.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). There is no doubt that this report assumes special importance at a time when we are experiencing an increasing need to deepen and enhance cooperation between the two organizations in development, social, economic, military, political, diplomatic and other fields, all of which aim at serving the common interests of the African continent in general, and at upgrading the structure and institutional capacities of the OAU, in particular.

In this respect, may I express appreciation of the continuous efforts of the United Nations Secretariat and of the OAU secretariat for strengthening the mechanism for cooperation and consultation between the two organizations which culminate with meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the OAU twice a year, once in conjunction with the OAU summit and once in conjunction with the session of the General Assembly in New York.

During the past year, the African continent has experienced an escalation in the number of armed conflicts, from the Great Lakes region where the conflict rages in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the conflicts in the Horn of Africa between Ethiopia and

Eritrea, to the crisis afflicting Somalia since 1991, to West Africa where the civil war in Sierra Leone has witnessed the perpetration of atrocities and gross violations that recall the genocide experienced by Rwanda in 1994, to the situation in the south where the conflict in Angola continues because of the failure of UNITA to fulfil its commitments under the Lusaka Protocol.

At the same time, no fair-minded observer can deny that Africa — on the continental level represented in the OAU and on the regional level represented in subregional organizations — has redoubled its efforts in order to achieve African solutions to African conflicts and to tackle the challenges facing the continent on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

This desire by Africa is evidenced in the achievement of the ceasefire agreement for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was signed in Lusaka; the peace accord in Sierra Leone, which was signed in Lomé; the fact that the OAU and its current Chairman have taken the initiative to settle the Ethiopian/Eritrean conflict; and finally, the choice of President Mandela as a new mediator for the peace process in Burundi.

If the international community expects Africa to assume its responsibilities and to activate its efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security on the continent, Africa expects the international community, represented in the United Nations, to assume its collective responsibility towards the continent in implementation of the purposes and principles set forth in the Charter, and not simply to express its support for Africa's efforts to settle conflicts raging in its territories.

I cannot fail to address the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The parties to the conflict signed the ceasefire agreement on 10 July, about five months ago. Regrettably, thus far the Organization has only despatched scores of military liaison officers to the capitals of the States members of the Joint Military Commission and to a number of field positions inside the Congo.

It is also regrettable that the Security Council did not establish the peacekeeping operation, whose deployment has been delayed for a long time. Nor did the Council even grant a clear and explicit mandate to the Secretary-General to deploy the 500 military observers authorized by the Council by its resolution 1279 (1999). In this respect, we had expected the Council to accord the same interest to this conflict and to assume the same degree of responsibility for its settlement as it did in Kosovo, East Timor and other regions, in a manner that would not prompt us to question the real reasons for the absence of the political will and, in some cases, the financial will on the part of the international community to settle conflicts in the African continent.

Mr. Baali (Algeria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The enhancement of cooperation between all the major bodies of the United Nations and the OAU in various fields is necessary for the settlement of the disputes that are raging in the continent, as well as for the promotion of socio-economic and human development in its States. In this connection, we welcome the valuable role played by the United Nations liaison office at Addis Ababa. We hope that role will be strengthened and that the office will have the financial and human resources necessary to carry out its numerous activities — activities that will undoubtedly escalate in response to the requirements imposed by the increasing coordination and cooperation between the two organizations.

We also call on the United Nations to increase its assistance to the OAU in order to strengthen the operational and institutional capabilities of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, in particular by developing the Organization's regional capabilities in early warning and logistical support and by mobilizing the financial resources generated by the two trust funds established by the United Nations and the OAU for those purposes.

In the same vein, we look forward to continued efforts by the United Nations to upgrade African capacities in peacekeeping operations. We welcome the recommendations contained in the study prepared by the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in March 1999 on cooperation between the United Nations and regional arrangements and organizations. This study took into account and reaffirmed the role played by regional organizations in peacekeeping. However, that role should not prejudice the responsibility of the United Nations under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the social and economic fields, the United Nations plays a unique role in the development process on the African continent by continuously supporting the building of the OAU's institutional capacities to promote regional economic integration of the States of Africa and to enhance the continent's ability to take advantage of international and bilateral initiatives to promote

development. I would like to commend the efforts made by the United Nations, its bodies and its implementing agencies to support the continent as it tackles the major challenges before it. Those efforts include developing human and institutional capacities, combatting poverty and creating a socio-economic environment conducive to the prevention of conflicts.

Allow me, in conclusion, to touch briefly on a question to which Egypt grants special importance. While we hope that the United Nations will enhance its role in the settlement of the various conflicts in Africa and intensify its efforts to promote economic progress and sustainable development on the continent, we would also like to recall that the Charter of the Organization assigned to the General Assembly a role in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Assembly therefore has an inherent responsibility in this regard. This fact has always prompted us to restate the principle of full respect for the delicate balance between the major organs of the international Organization as set out in the Charter, in particular the inherent role of the General Assembly in considering principles of cooperation aimed at relieving human suffering, including addressing the causes of conflict and the strengthening of lasting peace and sustainable development.

In this connection, we wish to express our surprise and regret at the fact that the progress report on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa was submitted only to the Security Council and not to the General Assembly and the other competent bodies of the United Nations system. We have already, and unsuccessfully, called for rectifying this situation. The progress report includes whole chapters that do not fall within the purview of the Security Council, such as those dealing with humanitarian assistance, development, trade, indebtedness, good governance and other issues. Those issues should be debated in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the other relevant bodies and agencies of the system.

Mr. Kiliba (United Republic of Tanzania): We thank the Secretary-General for his report, which provides valuable information on measures taken with a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We welcome these steps. We believe, however, that further efforts should be made to enhance that cooperation.

As we approach the new millennium, Africa and the OAU face a host of challenges, most of which will require continued support from and cooperation with the international community, especially the United Nations. In Africa the task of recovery and reconstruction remains formidable after the cold war, deep economic crises and humanitarian emergencies.

The *raison d'être* of the OAU, as embodied in its charter, is the attainment of peace and security, freedom and justice and economic and social development through common efforts among the African States. The OAU charter therefore seeks to promote within Africa the main purposes and principles enumerated in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. The objectives of the two organizations are compatible even though the order of priorities may not be identical. Needless to say, the OAU's goals of attaining unity, development, security and liberation can best be achieved under conditions of universal peace and security and international cooperation in all the problem areas enumerated in the charters of both organizations.

We see four broad areas where the interaction of the OAU and the United Nations would be especially meaningful.

The first pertains to the management, resolution and prevention of conflicts. There is no denying that this is one area where the United Nations has had considerable global experience and could therefore be of great assistance in strengthening the capacities of the OAU in that regard. We therefore note with appreciation that the report of the Secretary-General indicates that some resources have been provided through the United Nations Development Programme — to the tune of about $3 million — to strengthen the capacity of the OAU for conflict prevention, management and resolution. We believe that this partnership should be enhanced and increasingly focused on building the anticipatory, prevention, negotiation and peacemaking capacity of the OAU. Moreover, the capacity for peacekeeping must rightly be built within Member States, primarily on behalf of the United Nations, as well as the OAU and subregional organizations, such as the Southern African Development Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States. In this regard, we wish to thank those countries which have contributed to African capacity-building in terms of training and logistical support, as well as by making financial contributions to the OAU Peace Fund.

The second area is cooperation in the management of African humanitarian emergencies. As a result of inter-State and intra-State conflicts in the continent, the problems of African refugees and displaced persons have grown in magnitude while resources have been dwindling. Since the root causes of the refugee problem and the displacement of populations have not as yet been effectively addressed, the continued response capacities of the OAU and of the United Nations will remain critical.

The third area is the strengthening of collaboration between the two Organizations in the setting up of structures and norms. The OAU has striven to promote the adoption of various conventions, charters, declarations and programmes of action among African States with regard to social, economic, refugee, human rights, environmental, democratization and governance issues. In some cases, this has been a specific complement to United Nations efforts. Such demonstrable efforts to fulfil this shared vision and aspiration require deliberate mutual support.

The fourth area is cooperation in promoting African development. The magnitude of the African economic challenges is obvious. The OAU members constitute about two thirds of the world's least developed countries, whose existence is marked by a debilitating debt burden and a sharp fall in commodity prices. A response to African economic problems would also strengthen the OAU, and therefore its role in contributing to the ideals of the Charter of the United Nations, and it would act as a meaningful response to the problems facing Africa, which for so long have placed a heavy burden on the efforts and resources of the United Nations and the OAU.

The OAU and Africa have committed themselves to pursuing a course that would liberate them from the seemingly intractable problems they face and therefore free Africa from being seen as a continent in turmoil and strife. In realizing this objective, the OAU and Africa will require the support of the United Nations. A commendable beginning has been made by establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and putting in place structures for promoting economic development, human rights and democracy. Crucial to this process is the OAU's role in policy harmonization and implementation, which still require reinforcement. In a world of dwindling resources, the United Nations role of supporting the OAU and speaking for it and, therefore, for Africa, remains vital. The success of both the OAU and the United Nations in Africa depends on their close collaboration.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate the Secretary-General on the quality of his report (A/54/484) on agenda item 31, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". This cooperation is of particular importance for my delegation because, happily, it brings together the legitimate quest of African countries for the recovery of the continent and the no less fundamental need to incorporate the universal virtues enshrined by the United Nations. The Assembly will therefore appreciate the fact that my delegation is particularly interested in deepening and expanding cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

In the political and security field, this cooperation has reached a decisive turning point because of the impetus provided by the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations. I am pleased to note that they meet periodically, in particular during or immediately before OAU summits and General Assembly sessions, in order to coordinate better their activities in various areas. My delegation would like to welcome the establishment to that end of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU, which will facilitate synergy in the activities of the two institutions.

The problems of security, and therefore of peace, are at the heart of the concerns of African countries. Despite the courageous reforms carried out in order to improve the macroeconomic framework and democratize political systems, the continent of Africa continues to be convulsed by many hotbeds of tension. The OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution illustrates the will of the African countries to establish and promote an environment of peace and security so as to strengthen those reforms for the specific benefit of their peoples. That is why my delegation appreciates the support given by the United Nations to the OAU in this field and welcomes the fact that the resources of the United Nations Trust Fund created for that purpose will continue to improve the ability to prevent conflicts and maintain peace in Africa. Likewise, the United Nations Development Programme is carrying out an important project in this area so as to enhance the capacity of the human resources of the secretariat of the OAU.

With regard to the follow-up to major crises, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, often working closely with his counterpart at the OAU, has appointed envoys or

personal representatives to the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. We are also encouraged by the consideration being given to the deployment of United Nations forces in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo so as to consolidate the Lomé Peace Agreement and the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

These various achievements in support of peace are, of course, encouraging. But such measures, however positive they may be, have not been able to prevent resentment from being expressed towards the international community, which is often timid when it comes to managing crises breaking out in Africa. While the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council, supportive action by regional organizations, within the framework of concerted efforts, will always contribute to the proper management of crises that break out in various parts of Africa.

With regard to the question of refugees in Africa, I should like to stress that, despite the scale of the task — I need hardly recall the fact that there are 7 million refugees and displaced persons in Africa — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has always managed to implement its programmes for the return of refugees to their country of origin once the minimum security conditions have been met.

The UNHCR has in the past successfully carried out such operations in countries such as Mozambique, and we wish to congratulate the High Commissioner and, particularly, her staff, who work in often dangerous conditions.

My delegation attaches great importance to the return and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons in the West African subregion, especially in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, where the political situation has been evolving in a satisfactory way. My delegation therefore calls upon the UNHCR to continue its productive partnership with the OAU and lays particular stress on the importance of the mechanism for follow-up of the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons held in Khartoum in December 1998.

Our consideration of the item before us also provides an opportunity to welcome the close — I might almost say "osmotic" — relationship between the OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The expertise of the ECA staff, backed by their extraordinary understanding of the specific characteristics of Africa, has made the ECA an essential partner for the development of Africa. From the Lagos Plan of Action to the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the ECA has played an important role in formulating strategies for continental integration.

For its part, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in close cooperation with African countries, has recently begun the Alliance for Africa's Industrialization, the avowed purpose of which is to strengthen and diversify the secondary sector of the continent's economy.

The work of other agencies of the United Nations system has been equally excellent. The World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund are working to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic and to promote reproductive health. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) should be supported and encouraged by the donor community.

My delegation is convinced that the United Nations can do more and do better for Africa by further strengthening its cooperation with the OAU. As members know, since its establishment the OAU has undergone profound changes linked to the new concerns of its members. The decolonization agenda has been nearly completed, but the new challenges facing African countries — peace, security and development — are more complex in other ways. The OAU is therefore restructuring its secretariat with a view to strengthening it so that it can better face these challenges; those efforts deserve support in this crucial time in the history of the OAU.

My delegation reaffirms its faith in dynamic, multifaceted and mutually beneficial cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, an organization to which the African countries are firmly committed.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): As we enter the twenty-first century, ensuring peace and development in Africa remains an issue of the most fundamental importance to the United Nations and to the world community at large. It is clear that the future of Africa rests primarily in the hands of the African countries. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), representing all the African countries, therefore has a crucial role to play in promoting peace and stability and in the future development of the continent.

At the same time, it is also clear that the world community must involve itself more actively, through partnerships and cooperation. Norway has consistently taken the view that all Member States, especially the rich industrialized countries, have a moral and political obligation to assist in bringing lasting stability and prosperity to the African continent, as well as a strong interest in doing so. Social and economic development in Africa must be a joint and global responsibility. Cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, involving the African countries as well as the world community at large, is of vital value to our joint efforts.

The Norwegian Government welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU (A/54/484). It demonstrates the extent of interaction between the OAU and the United Nations in a wide range of areas. Norway notes with appreciation that cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU has expanded in the past year. The two organizations have great potential for reinforcing each others' efforts through practical cooperation, exchange of information and active coordination. An example of such cooperation was the very useful meeting on conflict management held in New York in April this year. Another example was the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons held in Khartoum, Sudan, in December of last year, which was co-sponsored by the OAU and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), with financial support from Norway. That meeting addressed important problems with respect to Africa's refugees and internally displaced persons. Norway also commends the cooperation between OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), focusing on issues such as good governance.

The Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1998/318) clearly demonstrated that poverty, underdevelopment and violent conflicts are closely linked. We cannot address one without addressing the others. The Secretary-General pointed to the need for a comprehensive approach and for better coordination of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building in the United Nations system. The Secretariat has already embarked on the process of implementation and follow-up in these areas. Norway fully supports the Secretary-General's initiative and is ready to provide practical and financial support for this important endeavour. We will set aside $3 million for use by the Secretariat for this purpose.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Norway's firm commitment to peace and development in Africa. African countries are Norway's main partners in development cooperation. My Government intends to further increase our transfers of official development assistance, up to 1 per cent of gross domestic product. We will continue our efforts to mobilize the global political will and financial means to realize the target of cutting poverty by half by the year 2015.

Conflict prevention, humanitarian aid and development efforts must go hand in hand. We must deal with the root causes of conflict, not just the symptoms. Effective crisis management must include efforts to promote long-term and sustainable development, to combat poverty and to relieve poor countries of their unsustainable debt burden, as well as efforts to promote democratic and economic reform. The emphasis must be on creating a process involving bilateral donors, multilateral institutions, regional organizations and Governments in constructive partnerships.

Important decisions were reached at this year's OAU meeting in your own country, Mr. Vice-President, in Algiers. Referring to the principle that good governance, transparency and human rights are "essential elements for building representative and stable governments and contribute to conflict prevention", it was decided that those Governments that had come to power through unconstitutional means should no longer be expected to be received as equals in an OAU assembly of Heads of State. The OAU's active involvement in the follow-up of this decision augurs well for the future of Africa and for the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations agencies.

Norway is encouraged by the determination that the OAU has shown in tackling issues related to good governance. An integral part of promoting sustainable human development is respect for all social and economic rights, as well as cultural, civil and political rights. In this regard, Norway welcomes the OAU's work on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Norway commends the efforts of African leaders, States and regional and subregional organizations to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The OAU has an especially important role to play in promoting peace and stability in Africa. My Government strongly supports the ongoing efforts by the OAU and the Algerian presidency to ensure a peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Close collaboration between the OAU, the United Nations and national Governments is needed to

resolve this and other conflicts on the African continent. Norway will continue to stand ready to assist in efforts to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts in cases where we can play a constructive role in cooperation with the parties.

Norway has for many years contributed financially to strengthening African capacity in peacekeeping and conflict prevention and is committed to continuing its efforts in these areas. In the last year, we have supported the OAU process for restructuring its organization. Norway has also given financial support to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

As reflected in the report of the Secretary-General, many United Nations organizations in the social and economic fields are promoting sustainable development in Africa. Cooperation between these organizations and the OAU, to the benefit of its member States, is of paramount importance. An example of this is the efforts to successfully combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic, involving the OAU and United Nations agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Norway provides significant financial resources in support of the crucial efforts of the United Nations to promote social and economic development in Africa.

In closing, my Government would like to call for even stronger support to the OAU by the international community. We also encourage even closer partnerships between the United Nations, OAU and African subregional organizations. Norway remains firmly committed to working with all of these and other relevant bodies, as well as African Governments, to achieve our common aims of ensuring peace, stability and development in Africa.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Let me at the outset express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Indeed, enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU will certainly strengthen the capacity of the OAU in responding to the increasing needs of its member States. In this context, we welcome the ongoing contacts and consultations between the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the OAU Observer Mission in New York. Similarly, the cooperation between the OAU and the special envoys of the United Nations Secretary-General provide an important and direct link, especially in the area of conflict prevention and management. We note the contribution of the United Nations experts in the design and modalities for the implementation of Agreements in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to mention but two cases. However, it is distressing to note that in the case of Sierra Leone, many months after the signing of the Peace Agreement, peacekeepers are yet to be fully deployed. The continued role of the United Nations in resource mobilization and the support of the international community in the implementation of peace agreements in Africa is therefore crucial. Furthermore, in this context, my delegation welcomes the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Peace Process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in assisting with mobilization of resources for the work of the Joint Military Commission and for the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in general. We concur with the view of the Secretary-General that the continuous provision of much-needed support for peacekeeping activities in Africa is necessary.

We call on the international community, especially the donor countries, to contribute to the Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa, as well as to the OAU Peace Fund aimed at assisting in building African peacekeeping capacities. The need for financial resources to enhance cooperation which will result in tangible benefits for the African people cannot be overemphasized.

The humanitarian needs of the African refugees and internally displaced persons require concerted efforts by the international community. Irrespective of media coverage, we the Members of this universal Organization should not abandon those in need in various parts of Africa. The continued provision of support by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance to the OAU in developing its institutional facilities for humanitarian coordination and exchange of information for early warning is therefore essential.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, this year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the OAU/Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Cooperation Agreement. Truly, this is not a time to celebrate, but a moment to ask ourselves what we can do together to eliminate the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, in Africa and in the world at large. No countries have paid a higher price than those countries hosting refugees. In the case of Africa, many host countries are least developed countries. Thus, the

problem of refugees places an added burden on their already weak economies. We call for increased support to the host countries. We note the continuous activities of UNHCR in Africa, and we call on the international community to respond positively and adequately to the appeals of UNHCR so as to enable it to cater for the needs of refugees in Africa. Similarly, the security and safety of refugees need to be addressed. In this connection, support for the Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons is paramount.

Notwithstanding the difficult economic and social conditions existing in many African countries and the environmental and desertification-related problems, the continent is doing all it can to create conditions for sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa. Indeed, the trends in the world economy does not bode well for the majority of African countries. The process for the establishment of the African Economic Community is therefore an important phase in the African development process and will assist in consolidating the efforts of African countries to revive and develop African economies. In this context, the Industrial Development Decade for Africa can make a meaningful contribution through the full and effective implementation of the programme for the Decade.

Furthermore, support to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is very important so as to enable it to carry out its programmes in Africa. In addition, the continued cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development secretariat is welcome, for it assists African countries in multilateral trade negotiations. We call upon the international community to support the capacity of African countries to benefit from the advantages offered by globalization and to deal with the risks and challenges it poses. In this connection, implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is needed.

In addition, the realization and development of the African Economic Community will be advanced by collaboration between the OAU and the activities of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to provide technical assistance to OAU members so as to help them strengthen their capacities for macroeconomic management.

In the continent with most of the least developed countries and at a time when official development assistance is on the decline, the United Nations funds and programmes continue to play an important role in the economic and social uplifting of our people. In this context, the Namibian Government was honoured to host the twenty-second ordinary session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Windhoek in April this year. In this connection, we await the outcome of the World Health Organization (WHO) study on the impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa and its link to child labour. It is our earnest hope that the findings of this study will above all galvanize worldwide support for the efforts of African Governments to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Furthermore, the African Initiative for Malaria Control and Roll Back Malaria need support. In this regard, we welcome the WHO/OAU partnership, and we call on the international community to support the overall objectives of this Initiative. While the focus has been on HIV/AIDS, malaria remains the number-one killer disease in many African countries, including Namibia. It is therefore crucial to support malaria-research-related activities.

We view cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU as an important partnership with far-reaching benefits. The African heads of State, at the last OAU summit, held in Algiers, adopted a Declaration that, *inter alia*, stated:

> "While expressing satisfaction at the various cooperation initiatives and approaches in favour of Africa, we reaffirm our readiness and willingness to promote, with all our partners, a genuine partnership devoid of any selfish calculations for influence; a partnership that respects the unity of the continent and aims at the development of Africa, rather than using it as a mere reservoir of raw materials and market for manufactured goods; a partnership that enables Africa to achieve its integration, ensure its development for the benefit of its peoples and occupy its rightful place on the international scene for the mutual and inclusive benefit of the international community as a whole." (*A/54/424, annex II, p. 66*)

Finally, as we prepare to enter the new millennium, let us do so in a genuine spirit of cooperation for the benefit of all mankind.

Mr. Muhammed (Ethiopia): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the

Organization of African Unity (OAU), contained in document A/54/484. Like reports of previous years, this report provides a clear description of the activities undertaken by the two organizations in the framework of their ongoing cooperation.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the cooperation between the secretariats of the United Nations and the OAU has significantly improved since 1997. We welcome the current practice of holding regular consultative meetings between the heads of the two organizations, as well as the continued exchange of experience and coordination at the level of the various departments and agencies.

The establishment of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU also constitutes an important step to enable wider coordination and exchange of information between the two organizations. While the establishment of the liaison office is further testimony to the desire of the United Nations to work closely with the OAU, the effectiveness and contribution of the office will depend on the clarity of its mandate and terms of reference, including the extent of its relationships both with United Nations Headquarters and with the OAU. In our opinion, the liaison office, given its limited scope in terms of capacity and resources, should focus on the well-defined priority activities originally envisaged in the area of enhancing African capacity in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the maintenance of peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. During the past year, the Organization of African Unity has continued its efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the continent.

My country fully supports these efforts by the OAU, and has on various occasions made its own contributions to the resolution of conflicts in various parts of Africa. With respect to the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Ethiopia has demonstrated its full respect for and commitment to the OAU by cooperating with its ongoing endeavours to resolve the crisis by peaceful means.

In dealing with this conflict, the OAU has once again shown its resolve and commitment to upholding justice and the principles enshrined both in its own Charter and in the Charter of the United Nations by adopting a Framework Agreement for the settlement of the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement. These two documents, which have been endorsed by the OAU Heads of State and Government and accepted fully by Ethiopia, address the fundamental cause of the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea and provide for the withdrawal of the armed forces of the aggressor State from all Ethiopian territories forcibly occupied since May 1998.

The OAU's position against aggression is consistent with the role envisaged for regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, and as such requires the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, to take concrete action for its implementation. Regrettably, despite the efforts of the OAU, the intransigence of the aggressor State in its refusal to accept and implement the OAU peace proposal, coupled with the unbalanced position taken by the Security Council, resulted in major fighting between Ethiopia and Eritrea in February 1999 and in the continuation of the crisis.

As in many other conflict situations in Africa, the manner in which the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea has been handled by the United Nations, particularly by the Security Council, has not only undermined the very essence of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, stipulated in the Organization's Charter, but has also reinforced the widely held view regarding the double standards and lack of resolve of the Council in dealing with African issues. It was therefore, in the light of this sad reality, that the Foreign Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in his address to the General Assembly at its current session, stated that

> "Africa has received little effective international cooperation, in particular from the United Nations, for sorting out its difficulties in the area of peace and security. Conflicts in Africa have had the fate of either being neglected or, when not neglected, being judged and handled by different standards." (*A/54/PV.21, p. 25*)

Experience has shown that, whether in the area of peace and security or in respect of economic development cooperation, Africa continues to be marginalized and least favoured for genuine cooperation. Hence, despite the efforts of most African countries, the economic situation in the continent remains precarious and

economic recovery and development continue to be severely hindered by multiple factors. The persistence of conflicts, the debt burden, the decline in official development assistance, the net outflow of resources and the conditionalities that international lending institutions lay down in providing access to development financing — to mention just a few factors — are paralysing growth and development in the continent. As these challenges show no sign of abating and threaten to deteriorate further, even on this very eve of the twenty-first century, the situation in Africa, including the role that the United Nations could play in cooperation with the OAU, needs a close and objective evaluation.

Notwithstanding the challenges and difficulties, especially in mobilizing international support for Africa, the United Nations has nonetheless remained engaged through its various agencies in many vital areas related to African economic recovery and development. In this context, my delegation acknowledges at the same time the important role of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, which, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank, continues to play a crucial role in the establishment and consolidation of the African Economic Community (AEC) and of the subregional economic communities that will serve as building blocks for the AEC. Cooperation over the past year between the OAU and various United Nations agencies — such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and others — has also been encouraging.

With regard to social issues, we welcome the achievements made through OAU's cooperation with, among others, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The progress that the OAU and UNHCR have made with respect to the welfare of refugees in Africa is particularly worth mentioning. Similarly, the important support of WHO in such critical areas as polio eradication, malaria prevention and control and the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Africa needs to be further enhanced. In this respect, I would like to seize this opportunity to appeal to United Nations agencies, the international community and donor countries to give more attention to Africa's struggle against the HIV/AIDS scourge, which is afflicting the continent at an alarming rate.

Since its establishment in 1963, the Organization of African Unity has endeavoured, in pursuit of the lofty objectives envisioned by the founding fathers, to meet the multifaceted challenges facing Africa. In the area of peace and security, OAU's efforts have culminated in the setting-up of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, while, in the sphere of economic development and regional economic integration, the conclusion of the Abuja Treaty and the establishment of the African Economic Community mark two more milestone achievements.

Therefore, these achievements and the efforts of Africa in general can be sustained and further enhanced only in a favourable international environment of genuine partnership on the part of the rest of the world. In this regard, the role of the United Nations and its cooperation with the OAU will remain indispensable in the years to come.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to associate myself fully with the message delivered yesterday at the 72nd meeting of the General Assembly by the Ambassador of Algeria, representing the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is of particular importance this year. Indeed, on the eve of the twenty-first century, it must identify the future direction of the 25-year relationship between the United Nations and the OAU.

First enshrined in Security Council resolution 199 (1964) of 30 December 1964, through which the Council recognized the Organization of African Unity as a regional organization in the context of Article 52 of the United Nations Charter, this cooperation was solemnly established by the agreement of 15 November 1965 and flows from the wishes of the founding fathers of the pan-African organization themselves. Meeting in Addis Ababa in May 1963, African leaders clearly affirmed their desire to strengthen and support the United Nations, in particular in the search for and implementation of solutions to their fundamental problems.

How could it have been otherwise? We know that the OAU was created in conformity with the United

Nations Charter and that the relationship between the United Nations Charter and the OAU charter is evident. As the United Nations Secretary-General justly pointed out at the first session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity in Cairo in July 1964:

> "The charter of the Organization of African Unity not only follows that of the United Nations in form, but ... it reaffirms the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations."

Beyond these similarities, the OAU charter also and particularly affirms specific objectives and important ambitions for Africa.

The African countries were in favour of formalizing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU not only in order to make OAU activity more visible, but also and particularly to assure the full support of the United Nations in the pursuit of both the universal and specific objectives assigned to it.

Since 1965, many resolutions have been adopted on strengthening this cooperation, the latest of which was resolution 53/91 of 7 December 1998. An important road has been travelled and significant stages have been traversed within the framework of this cooperation. History will particularly remember that it was thanks to the joint and sustained efforts of the United Nations and the OAU that Africa and the world will have been rid of two major ills: colonialism and apartheid.

Beyond these important historical accomplishments, the Secretary-General's report before us provides us with an opportunity to express our appreciation for the important and ongoing efforts, with a view to strengthening healthy and fruitful cooperation between the two organizations. A reading of the report shows that these efforts have focused on broadening and strengthening the framework of cooperation, as well as on the search for concrete solutions to the various problems which Africa must face.

Regarding the broadening and strengthening of the framework of cooperation, my delegation welcomes the important decision taken by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU in January 1997 to meet twice a year, with a view to examining the priority areas of cooperation and to coordinating their efforts. My delegation also welcomes the establishment in Addis Ababa in April 1998 of a United Nations liaison office, the purpose of which is to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. These are all measures which will likely permit better coordination and thus greater effectiveness in the initiatives of the two organizations, particularly those relating to high-priority issues.

Regarding the field of implementation, we welcome that cooperation has continued both in the fields of peace and security, with special emphasis on strengthening Africa's capacities for the maintenance of peace and in the field of economic and social development, another major concern of African countries.

Despite the joint efforts of the two organizations in support of actions conceived and carried out by the African countries themselves, as well as assistance provided by bilateral partners, we are forced to note that, on the eve of the new millennium, Africa is still encountering various vital problems. Such a situation is a challenge to the international community as a whole. It is an invitation to show greater imagination in devising solutions. It is an invitation to be more determined in the actions to be undertaken and to be more generous in their implementation. Lastly, it is a pressing invitation to shed the pervading and recurrent Afro-pessimism, which, as Kierkegaard said, leads nowhere.

At the dawn of the new millennium the African countries, fully conscious of the scope of their problems, adopted at Algiers and Sirte this year important decisions and identified priorities for action in the coming years. It is precisely in the light of these firm decisions and priorities of the heads of State, that the expectations of African countries on cooperation with the United Nations must be evaluated.

In the important Sirte Declaration, we can read in particular:

> "As we prepare to enter the twenty-first century, and cognizant of the challenges that will confront our continent and peoples, we emphasize the imperative need and a high sense of urgency to rekindle the aspirations of our peoples for stronger unity, solidarity and cohesion in a larger community of peoples transcending cultural, ideological, ethnic and national differences.
>
> "... It is also our conviction that our continental Organization needs to be revitalized in order to be able to play a more active role and continue to be relevant to the needs of our peoples and responsive to the demands of the prevailing

circumstances. We are also determined to eliminate the scourge of conflicts which constitutes a major impediment to the implementation of our development and integration agenda." (*A/54/621, annex*)

Whether we use a few words or 100 words, the point at issue is that the United Nations must, more than ever before, help the OAU attain its priority objectives of lasting peace and development for an integrated Africa in today's context of globalization.

From this viewpoint, the United Nations is invited to continue to contribute to strengthening the institutional and operational capacities of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa. It is also invited to support the subregional organizations working for the attainment of these same objectives, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

Finally, the United Nations is invited to support and help strengthen the capacities of the African countries to allow them to benefit from the many possibilities offered to them by globalization and to mitigate their negative effects. Thanks to such support, globalization will mean for Africa cooperation and participation, and not marginalization.

Turning now specifically to the objective of sustainable development, my delegation would like to express its full appreciation for the role played by the United Nations through the United Nations Development Programme. At a time when a change in this organ is increasingly at issue, it strikes us that this is a most opportune moment to stress and to specify its role.

Finally, my delegation remains convinced that the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU also presupposes effective and equitable representation of African men and women in responsible decision-making posts in United Nations organs.

The draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, which is now before the General Assembly, embodies all these expectations of African peoples. The draft resolution, introduced yesterday by the Ambassador of Algeria, representing the current Chairman of the OAU, reflects the priorities and objectives of the African continental organization. Above all, it expresses Africa's vision of the kind of relations it wishes to have with the United Nations in the century to come.

On behalf of the member States of the African Group, my delegation hopes that this forward-looking draft resolution will be adopted by consensus. Africa will gain, and the United Nations will be strengthened.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I call on the representative of Poland, who wishes to speak on a point of order.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): I wish to state for the record that Poland associates itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union on the agenda item under consideration.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.38.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.38?

Draft resolution A/54/L.38 was adopted (resolution 54/94).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 31?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 20 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Draft resolution (A/54/L.54)

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolutions (A/54/L.49, A/54/L.53, A/54/L.56, A/54/L.57)

(c) Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Draft resolution (A/54/L.22/Rev.1)

(d) Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets' in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Draft resolution (A/54/L.34/Rev.1)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held its debate on agenda item 20 and its sub-items (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) at its 58th, 59th and 60th plenary meetings, on 19 and 22 November 1999.

I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.54.

Mr. Norström (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, the draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, contained in document A/54/L.54.

The draft resolution was discussed in two rounds of informal consultations. In those consultations some valuable proposals were made for the improvement of the text, and agreement was reached on all paragraphs. My delegation is grateful for the contributions made by other delegations and for the good spirit of cooperation and partnership in which these consultations were held.

In the draft resolution, the General Assembly would recall its previous resolutions on the topic, take note of the report of the Secretary-General and welcome the progress made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in strengthening that coordination. The General Assembly would welcome the second humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council held this past summer and the agreed conclusions from that session, and would call upon relevant actors to cooperate to ensure the implementation of and follow-up to the agreed conclusions.

Furthermore, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, early in the year 2000, concrete proposals in order to enhance the functioning and utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund.

Finally, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session and through the 2000 session of the Economic and Social Council, on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

My delegation and the other sponsors trust that the draft resolution can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I call on the representative of Tajikistan to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.49.

Mr. Nurov (Tajikistan): The delegation of Tajikistan has the honour to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.49, entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan".

The consideration and adoption of this draft resolution will show adequate support by the international community for the peace process in Tajikistan, which has entered its final stage.

My delegation believes that the continuation of the United Nations humanitarian programme in Tajikistan will make it possible to significantly complement the efforts of the Government to fully implement the General Agreement on peace in conditions of social security and will facilitate the establishment of necessary conditions for sustainable development in the transition period.

We warmly welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to issue a consolidated inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance in Tajikistan for 2000. As has been stated by the Secretary-General, humanitarian operations will remain a critical factor in ensuring stability in Tajikistan.

The draft resolution, in particular, welcomes the efforts aimed at achieving peace and national reconciliation, as well as the activities of the Secretary-General in drawing the attention of the world community to significant humanitarian needs of the country, and commends the efforts undertaken by States and organizations in responding positively to the country's humanitarian needs. It also recognizes that comprehensive international support remains essential for meeting the basic needs of the people and for strengthening the progress achieved in the peace process, and it requests

the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the humanitarian situation in Tajikistan and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

We express our sincere appreciation to all the countries that have become sponsors of the draft resolution. Egypt, Pakistan and Slovenia have joined the list of sponsors, which should have originally included Kyrgyzstan. We also express our appreciation to the delegations that contributed to the final preparation of the draft resolution under the excellent coordination efforts of the Ambassador of Denmark, Mr. Jørgen Bøjer.

We hope that the draft resolution will receive strong support and that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The President: I next call on the representative of Cameroon to introduce draft resolutions A/54/L.53, A/54/L.56, A/54/56 and A/54/57.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) *(spoke in French)*: The General Assembly is today considering agenda item 20, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions".

On behalf of the African Group, I have the honour to invite the Assembly and, through it, the international community to focus its attention on the socio-economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Djibouti and at the same time to solicit increased humanitarian and financial assistance to support the recovery of these countries and peoples afflicted by war and natural disasters.

Indeed, I should be soliciting this manifestation of international solidarity for Africa as a whole. As the Assembly is aware, 44 per cent of Africans and 51 per cent of Africans in sub-Saharan Africa live in a state of absolute poverty. The armed conflicts that have for years been tearing apart the Horn of Africa and Central Africa have resulted in thousands of deaths, orphans, refugees and displaced persons — in brief, an unprecedented humanitarian disaster compounded by the collapse of economic and social and, sometimes, political infrastructures.

An improvement in the situation of these countries and peoples in distress necessarily calls for an increased mobilization of the international community to support efforts for peace now under way, but also requires collateral assistance to rebuild economic and social infrastructures. Meeting the fundamental needs of the people and improving their conditions of life is indeed both a precondition for and a guarantee of the establishment of a lasting peace.

That being said, may I briefly set out the content of each of the draft resolutions.

Draft resolution A/54/L.53 is entitled "Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo". There can be no economic recovery without peace, a healthy economic policy, good management of public affairs and the determined support of the international community.

Hence the appeal to all the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to respect the Lusaka Agreement and for a constructive dialogue. Hence, also, the urgent invitation to the Government to establish a state of law that respects the human person, to create an environment that is attractive to investors and to favour and promote the participation of all in the life and management of the country.

Hence, finally, the request to the Secretary-General to act in coordination with the OAU and the States of the region in searching for ways to bring about a settlement of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the establishment of peace in the country and in the subregion.

Draft resolution A/54/L.56 deals with assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti.

The following countries have joined the African Group to become sponsors of the draft resolution: France, India, Italy and Oman.

The people of Djibouti are facing acute difficulties because of climatic hazards. Before, rains devastated the country, and now, drought has resulted in incalculable consequences.

This extremely precarious situation is exacerbated by the persistence of conflicts and instability in the region.

The courage of the people of Djibouti and the determination of their Government in pursuing the

consolidation of democracy and implementing a structural adjustment programme are exemplary. They expect increased and multifaceted assistance from the United Nations. They deserve it.

Draft resolution A/54/L.57 deals with humanitarian assistance to Somalia and with support for the economic and social rehabilitation of the country. The following countries have joined the African Group in sponsoring this draft resolution: Bahrain, China, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The situation in Somalia is characterized by the absence of a central power and the need for ever-increasing humanitarian assistance. The draft resolution before the Assembly welcomes the action carried out under these conditions by the United Nations Secretary-General, in conjunction with the OAU and other regional organizations, to mitigate human suffering, remedy the situation in Somalia and re-establish its infrastructures and economic, social and political services in order to ensure its economic recovery. These efforts, like the assistance of the international community, call for the Somali parties to the conflict to demonstrate a willingness for national reconciliation.

All these draft resolutions are largely inspired by those adopted at previous sessions. They have but one objective: to prompt increased mobilization of international solidarity in favour of these countries and peoples who are dealing with acute difficulties that are sometimes due to nature but, unfortunately, are mostly due to human activity.

On behalf of the States members of the African Group and of the sponsors, I would like to thank the Assembly for the determined support it will demonstrate, as in the past, in support of peace and development in these countries by adopting these draft resolutions by consensus. The Congolese, Somali and Djiboutian peoples will remember.

The President: I now call on the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/54/L.34/Rev.1.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for Argentina to introduce on behalf of the sponsors the draft resolution on the participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude for the interest and support this initiative has received. We would like to report that in addition to the sponsors whose names appear on the draft resolution, Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Jamaica, Madagascar and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have joined the list of sponsors.

This draft resolution seeks to reflect the progress that has been achieved. The White Helmets initiative, a mechanism of a voluntary nature that — either bilaterally or through cooperation with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and in collaboration with United Nations Volunteers — places at the disposal of the system teams of volunteers that have been previously trained and identified to respond in a rapid and coordinated manner to the need for humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

From its creation, the White Helmets initiative has clearly manifested its non-political, neutral and impartial attitude towards humanitarian action. The draft resolution we are introducing likewise aims to foster the creation of volunteer teams at both the national and regional levels that can serve as reserves to be made available to the United Nations through the United Nations Volunteers to serve in cases of emergency and for rehabilitation activities. The draft resolution calls upon Member States to promote cooperation between the United Nations system and the respective civil societies through national volunteer teams, forming an accessible world network of rapid reaction services available in cases of humanitarian emergency.

As the Secretary-General has stated on more than one occasion, and recently during his visit to Argentina, the active participation of civil society in the activities of the United Nations is an indispensable prerequisite for the success of humanitarian missions. This is the essential concept that motivates the draft resolution. We hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/54/L.22/Rev.1, L.34/Rev.1, L.49, L.53, L.54, L.56 and L.57.

The Assembly will take a decision on the seven draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 20 and its sub-items (a), (b), (c) and (d).

Under sub-item (a) of agenda item 20, the Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.54, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". Since the introduction of the draft resolution the following countries have become sponsors: Armenia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Fiji, Gabon, Iceland, Liechtenstein, the Sudan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.54?

Draft resolution A/54/L.54 was adopted (resolution 54/95).

The President: The Assembly, under sub-item (b) of agenda item 20, will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/54/L.49, A/54/L.53, A/54/L.56 and A/54/L.57.

Draft resolution A/54/L.49 is entitled "Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and rehabilitation in Tajikistan".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.49?

Draft resolution A/54/L.49 was adopted (resolution 54/96 A).

The President: Draft resolution A/54/L.53 is entitled "Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.53?

Draft resolution A/54/L.53 was adopted (resolution 54/96 B).

The President: Draft A/54/L.56 is entitled "Assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.56?

Draft resolution A/54/L.56 was adopted (resolution 54/96 C).

The President: Draft resolution A/54/L.57 is entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.57?

Draft resolution A/54/L.57 was adopted (resolution 54/96 D).

The President: Under sub-item (c) of agenda item 20, the General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.22/Rev.1, entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster".

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.22/Rev.1: Cyprus, Malta and Turkey.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.22/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/54/L.22/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 54/97).

The President: Under sub-item (d) of agenda item 20, the General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.34/Rev.1, entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/54/L.34/Rev.1: Bangladesh and Cameroon.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/54/L.34/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/54/L.34/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 54/98).

The President: I should like to inform members that the Assembly will take action on other draft resolutions submitted or to be submitted under agenda item 20 and its sub-items at a later date to be announced.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (c) and (d) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 47 *(continued)*

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Draft resolution (A/54/L.27)

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/54/651)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 56th plenary meeting, on 18 November 1999.

I should now like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the report of the Fifth Committee contained in document A/54/651 on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/54/L.27.

I should like to inform members that draft resolution A/54/L.24/Rev.1, entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development", will be taken up at a later date.

We now turn to draft resolution A/54/L.27, entitled "United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala". I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/54/L.27, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Uruguay.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/54/L.27. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 54/99).

The President: I call on the representative of Guatemala.

Ms. Castellanos-González (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to thank all those delegations that joined in adopting draft resolution A/54/L.27. When the draft resolution was introduced, on 18 November, we explained why it was so important to us that the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) be extended, so I need not repeat our position today. Permit me merely to say that, in our view, the continued presence of MINUGUA in Guatemala is essential for the continued implementation of the Peace Agreements.

With a new Administration coming into office in January 2000, the resolution adopted today makes possible the continued presence of MINUGUA. For this we are most grateful.

The President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 47.

Postponement of the date of recess

The President: I should like to draw the attention of members to a matter relating to the date of recess. Members will recall that at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly decided that the fifty-fourth session should recess on 14 December 1999. However, the Assembly will not be able to conclude its work on Tuesday, 14 December. I should like, therefore, to propose to the Assembly that it postpone its date of recess until 17 December 1999.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to this proposal?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.